

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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LORETTA J. FUDDY, A.C.S.W., M.P.H.
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH

**WRITTEN
ONLY**

In reply, please refer to:
File:

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

HCR23, ESTABLISHING A HAWAII STATE FALL PREVENTION AND EARLY DETECTION TASKFORCE TO DEVELOP A STATEWIDE APPROACH TO REDUCING FALLS AMONG OLDER ADULTS

Testimony of Loretta J. Fuddy, A.C.S.W., M.P.H.
Director of Health

April 1, 2011, 10:45am

- 1 **Department's Position:** The Department of Health supports this measure to establish a Hawaii
- 2 Fall Prevention and Early Detection Taskforce to develop a coordinated statewide approach to
- 3 reducing falls among older adults.
- 4 **Fiscal Implications:** None.
- 5 **Purpose and Justification:** Falls and fall-related injuries among older adults impose an
- 6 enormous burden on individuals, society, and Hawaii's health care system. Among adults 65
- 7 years and older, falls are by far the leading cause of injury-related deaths and hospitalizations,
- 8 and by far the leading cause of EMS attended injuries. Falls among older adults are also a
- 9 leading contributor overall to injury-related deaths and hospital, emergency department and EMS
- 10 use. Falls impact the quality of life and independence of older adults. Over half of those
- 11 hospitalized from a fall go to a care home or rehab center and many never regain full
- 12 independence. Direct medical charges for fall and fall-related injuries amount to \$82.8 million,

1 an amount that does not include the costs of rehabilitation and long term care, which is
2 undoubtedly far greater.

3 Fall-related injuries can be prevented and are not an inevitable part of aging. The
4 Department has already taken some steps to address fall injuries among older adults as a critical
5 public health issue in Hawaii, including organizing a 65-member Fall Prevention Consortium
6 that initiates collaborative efforts to address fall prevention. Considering the magnitude of falls
7 among older adults and the anticipated increase in this age group in the next 20 years to over
8 22% of Hawaii's population, these efforts and the current level of resources are not sufficient.
9 The taskforce proposed in HCR23 elevates fall prevention for older adults as a policy priority for
10 the state by bringing together the leadership and expertise from key agencies and organizations
11 to determine the most effective means to prevent and reduce fall-related injuries and deaths. The
12 Taskforce builds on the efforts of the Hawaii Fall Prevention Consortium.

13 The Department agrees with the changes to HCR23 proposed by the Executive Office on
14 Aging in their testimony, and is prepared to carry out the duties as described in the resolution in
15 collaboration with state, county, and community partners.

16 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



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Joint Committee on Health and Higher Education

**HCR 23, ESTABLISHING A HAWAII STATE FALL PREVENTION AND EARLY
DETECTION TASK FORCE TO DEVELOP A STATEWIDE APPROACH TO
REDUCING FALLS AMONG OLDER ADULTS.**

**Testimony of Wes Lum
Director, Executive Office on Aging
Attached Agency to Department of Health**

Friday, April 1, 2011

10:45 a.m.

1 **EOA's Position:** The Executive Office on Aging (EOA) supports this measure and asks that the
2 resolution be amended as specified below.

3 **Fiscal Implications:** None.

4 **Purpose and Justification:** Among the elderly, falls in Hawaii are the leading cause of fatal
5 injuries, injury-related hospitalizations, injury-related emergency department visits, and injury-
6 related emergency medical service calls. Fortunately, falls are a public health problem that is
7 largely preventable and, therefore, EOA appreciates the opportunity to chair and provide staff
8 support for the Task Force.

9 EOA requests that this measure be amended as follows:

10 (1) Designate EOA, rather than the University of Hawaii Center on Aging, to convene the
11 Task Force (page 2, lines 9-10).

1 (2) Reduce the number of Task Force members to four members appointed by the
2 Governor, four members appointed by the President of the Senate, and four members
3 appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives (page 3, lines 1-5).

4 (3) To ensure statewide participation, increase the number of “additional members who are
5 leaders in their industry or directors of their departments” (page 3, lines 5-6) from six
6 members to include:

7 a. The County Executive of the Maui County Office on Aging, or the County
8 Executive’s designee.

9 b. The County Executive of the Kauai Agency on Elderly Affairs, or the County
10 Executive’s designee.

11 c. The County Executive of the Hawaii County Office of Aging, or the County
12 Executive’s designee.

13 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committees on Health and Higher Education
Friday, April 1, 2011 at 10:45 a.m.

By
Virginia Hinshaw, Chancellor
And
Colette Browne, Professor and
Interim Director, Center on Aging
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

**HCR 23 ESTABLISHING A HAWAII STATE FALL PREVENTION AND EARLY
DETECTION TASK FORCE TO DEVELOP A STATEWIDE APPROACH TO
REDUCING FALLS AMONG OLDER ADULTS.**

Chairs Yamane and Nishimoto, and members of the committees, my name is Colette Browne, and I serve as the Interim Director for the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Center on Aging. We support the intent of HCR 23. Falls are serious problems for older adults, and can lead to great individual, family and public health costs.

Upon further discussion of this measure with Dr. Wesley Lum, Director of the State Executive Office on Aging (EOA), we request the following amendment:

Designate EOA, rather than the University of Hawai'i Center on Aging, to convene the Task Force (page 2, lines 9-10).

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Charlotte A. Carter-Yamauchi
Acting Director

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LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE BUREAU
State of Hawaii
State Capitol
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Written Comments

HCR23 **ESTABLISHING A HAWAII STATE FALL PREVENTION AND** **EARLY DETECTION TASK FORCE TO DEVELOP A** **STATEWIDE APPROACH TO REDUCING FALLS AMONG OLDER ADULTS**

Comments by the Legislative Reference Bureau
Charlotte A. Carter-Yamauchi, Acting Director

Presented to the House Committee on Health
and House Committee on Higher Education

Friday, April 1, 2010, 10:45 a.m.
Conference Room 329

Chairs Yamane and Nishimoto and Members of the Committee:

I am Charlotte Carter-Yamauchi, Acting Director of the Legislative Reference Bureau. The Bureau appreciates this opportunity to submit the following written comments on House Concurrent Resolution No. 23:

H.C.R. No. 23, among other things:

- (1) Creates a task force to develop a statewide approach to reducing falls among older adults. and
- (2) Directs the Legislative Reference Bureau to assist the task force in drafting any proposed legislation recommended by the task force for submission to the Legislature.

The Bureau takes no position on the merits of the measure, but notes that, as the measure is presently drafted, the functions required of the Bureau appear to be manageable and we would undertake them to the best of our ability.

However, to minimize interference with our heaviest bill drafting period in the run-up to the start of session and to ensure that the legislation will be submitted to the Legislature in a timely manner, we request that a clarifying amendment be made to the resolution to provide that any proposals for drafting legislation be submitted to the Bureau no later than November 1, 2011, and 2012 respectively.

Thank you again for allowing us to comment on this measure.

Email to HLTtestimony@Capitol.hawaii.gov

**House Committees on Health and Higher Education
HCR 23 RELATING TO A HAWAII STATE FALL PREVENTION AND EARLY
DETECTION TASK FORCE**

**April 1, 2011
10:45 AM
Conference Room 329**

To the Honorable:

Health - Chair Rep. Ryan Yamane & Vice-Chair Rep. Dee Morikawa

Higher Education – Chair Rep. Scott Nishimoto & Vice-Chair Mark Nakashima

My name is Stan Michaels, and I wish to express my support for House Concurrent Resolution 23 which calls for the formation of a Fall Prevention and Early Detection Task Force. Falls and fall related injuries among older adults impose an enormous burden on individuals, society, and Hawaii's health care system. Among older adults 65 years and older, falls are by far the leading cause of injury-related deaths and hospitalizations, and by far the leading cause of EMS attended injuries among older adults. Hawaii leads the nation in longevity and as our seniors age the impact of fall injuries has grown enormously.

However falls are preventable and are not inevitable due to aging. There are many types of interventions including balance screenings, medication reviews, and vision examinations that can help determine those seniors at risk of falling and exercise programs including tai chi to increase balance and strength and reduce falls.

HCR23 includes key recommendations for:

- Investigating and examining the immediate and long-term dangers of fall injuries on our senior population,
- Examining the fiscal impact of senior falls on our medical system and health care costs,
- investigating the most effective means to enhance public awareness that falls are preventable,
- reviewing the potential for increasing the availability for the elderly and their caregivers, on a statewide basis, the availability and accessibility of fall prevention and early detection services and programs that effectively use community resources, and
- to investigate the best way to expand the roles of medical and health care professionals in screening, educating and referring the elderly to fall prevention and early detection programs.

I strongly support the formation of the task force and the passage of HCR23

Sincerely,

Stan Michaels
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